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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: BLASTS ROCK HYDERABAD; EXTORTION NOT NAXALITE
POLITICS TO BLAME

1 (U) SUMMARY: A series of four bomb blasts in Hyderabad over the past several weeks appears to be the work of a small splinter group called the Communist Party of United States of India (CPUSI). The explosions were all relatively small and seem to have been geared toward creating panic that might be exploited for the extortion of money from wealthy targets. The People's War Maoist group, normal suspects in this type of incident in Andhra Pradesh, do not appear to have been involved in these incidents. END SUMMARY

FOUR BLASTS IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS

12. (U) The latest in a series of bomb blasts in Hyderabad was probably targeted at media mogul Ramoji Rao whose ETV network serves nearly one billion viewers in India and abroad. Rao also owns "Eenadu," India's largest circulation Telugu language daily with over one million readers. The most recent blast occurred on November 4 near "Kalanjali" a popular handicraft showroom owned by Rao's family. It was just the latest in a series of bomb explosions in the city. Two weeks earlier, an irrigation canal pipeline was blown up and last week, in separate incidents, explosions damaged two busses owned by private colleges in the city. Gelignite residue was found at all of the bombsites.

NOT THE USUAL SUSPECTS THIS TIME

13. (U) When this type of action occurs in Andhra Pradesh, the usual suspects are the People's War group (PW) who recently announced their merger with another large Indian Maoist group, the Maoist Communist Center (MCC). This time, though, it doesn't appear to be their work. They are engaged in talks with the government of Andhra Pradesh and have announced a ceasefire during the talks.

POLICE BELIEVE EXTORSION IS THE MOTIVE

14. (U) Hyderabad Police Commissioner R. P. Singh told Post that the explosions appear to be the work of a small splinter group that broke away from the Naxalites and call themselves the Communist Party of United States of India (CPUSI). Singh said that police were "90% sure" that this same group was behind all four blasts. Extortion seems to have been the motive. The group apparently was using the attacks to spread panic in the city as a prelude to extorting money from wealthy targets like Rao, private colleges with deep pockets and others.

MORE TO COME?

15. (U) COMMENT: Violence in Andhra Pradesh like this series of explosions has often been the work of Naxalite Maoists. This time, however, it appears to have been a prelude to an effort at extortion by a small group who broke away from the Naxalites. Without quick apprehension of the suspects, more blasts seem likely. END COMMENT

HAYNES